

Once Upon a Moon



## Once Upon a Moon

*Recommended for Ages 4-7*

*PreK to Grade 2*

### **A Reproducible Learning Guide for Educators**

This guide is designed to help educators prepare for, enjoy, and discuss *Once Upon a Moon*. It contains discussion questions, background, and activities appropriate for Ages 4-7.

### **Programs Are Made Possible, In Part, By Generous Gifts From:**

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## Fun Facts about the Moon!

- The Moon is the Earth's only natural satellite. A satellite is an object in space which orbits a planet.
- Our Moon is the fifth largest moon in our Solar System.
- The average distance from the Moon to the Earth is 238,857 miles. Flying from the earth to the Moon is about the same as flying around the earth 10 times!
- The Moon orbits the Earth every 27.3 days, which is about once a month.
- The first person to set foot on the Moon was Neil Armstrong in 1969.
- The Moon is very hot during the day but very cold at night. The average surface temperature of the Moon is 107 degrees Celsius during the day (twice as hot as it has ever been on Earth) and -153 degrees Celsius at night (twice as cold as it has ever been on earth) *Brrrrr!*
- The gravity of the Moon helps create our ocean tides on Earth.



## Moon Myths from Around the World

### The Rabbit on the Moon: *As told by Olga Loya*



Long ago, the gods tried four times to get the Sun in the sky but each time the Sun disappeared. All the world was cold and in darkness. The Aztec gods came together and tried to think of a way to get the Sun to stay in the sky.

One of the gods said, "We must build a big fire and one of us must throw ourselves into the fire." Well, they all thought it was good idea -- for someone else.

Finally, a god named Tecuiztcatl said, "Yo lo hare, I will do it, yo so poderoso, I am powerful."

Then Nanahauiztlin was chosen. He said, "Yo no soy poderosa. I am not powerful. It is true that I have been sick, and my body is covered with sores, but I am a good man."

So, the gods built a huge fire and danced and drummed around the fire for four days and nights. On the fourth night, all the gods arranged themselves into two lines. Tecuiztcatl was chosen first. He ran toward the fire but when he got to it, he stopped. Then he looked around and said, "Tengo miedo. I am afraid." This happened three more times.

Then it was Nanahuatizin's turn. He stood at the beginning of the lines, determined. He ran down between the gods and when he got to the edge, he jumped into the fire with a shout of joy. He went into the sky and became the Sun. Tecuiztecatl was so ashamed that he too leaped into the fire and another huge flaming Sun was in the sky.

The gods looked up and said, "Ah, this is good. Now we have two Suns." One of the gods said, "Wait, Tecuiztecatl has no right to shine as bright as brave Nanahautizin!"

The god picked up a round-eared rabbit and threw it at Tecuiztecatl. It went flying, spinning across the sky, and landed hard against him and knocked some of the light from him. Tecuiztecatl became the Moon, la Luna. Nanahautzin became the Sun, la sol.

When there is a full Moon, an outline of the rabbit the god threw that night can still be seen.



#### Pronunciation Guide

Tecuiztecatl (teh-cui-ziz -teh-CAH -tl)

Nanahautizin (nah-nah-HAU-tzin)

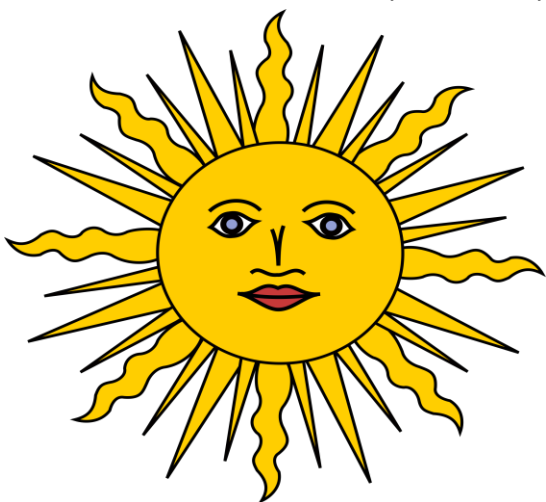
Hear this story and more online at

<https://www.lpi.usra.edu/education/explore/marvelMoon/tales/>.

#### Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky: A Nigerian Folktale

Many years ago, the Sun and the Water were great friends, and both lived on the earth together. The sun very often used to visit water, but the water never returned his visits. At last, the sun asked the water why it was that he never came to see him in his house. The water replied that the sun's house was not big enough, and that if he came with all his people, he would drive the sun out.

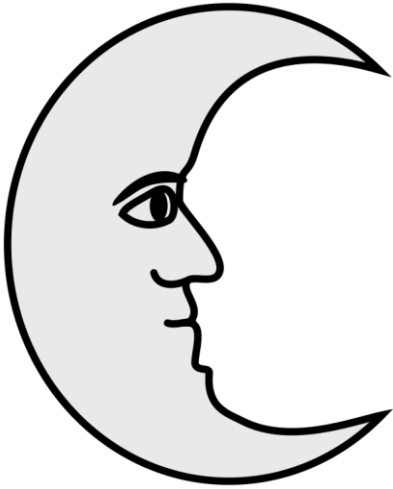
The water then said, "If you wish me to visit you, you must build a very large compound; but I warn you that it will have to be a tremendous place, as my people are very numerous and take up a lot of room."



The sun promised to build a very big compound, and soon afterward he returned home to his wife, the moon, who greeted him with a broad smile when he opened the door. The sun told the moon what he had promised the water, and the next day he commenced building a huge compound in which to entertain his friend.

When it was completed, he asked the water to come and visit him the next day. When the water arrived, he called out to the sun and asked him whether it would be safe for him to enter, and the sun answered, "Yes, come in, my friend."

The water then began to flow in, accompanied by the fish and all the water animals. Very soon the water was knee-deep, so he asked the sun if it was still safe, and the sun again said, "Yes," so more water came in.



When the water was level with the top of a man's head, the water said to the sun, "Do you want more of my people to come?"

The sun and the moon answered, "Yes," not knowing any better, so the water flowed in, until the sun and moon had to perch themselves on top of the roof. Again, the water addressed the sun, but, receiving the same answer, and more of his people rushing in, the water very soon overflowed the top of the roof, and the sun and the moon were forced to go up into the sky where they have remained ever since.

Read more online at: [www.library.si.edu/exhibition/artists-books-and-africa/african-folktale-full](http://www.library.si.edu/exhibition/artists-books-and-africa/african-folktale-full).

## Activities

### New Moon Game (2 players)

This game is great for practicing motor skills and learning some of the phases of the moon!

#### Materials:

- 5 pieces of paper
- Black marker

#### Directions:

Using your marker, draw each of the moon phases below on a different sheet of paper (examples below)

1. New Moon
2. Crescent Moon
3. Quarter Moon
4. Gibbous Moon
5. Full Moon



New Moon  
(not visible)



Crescent Moon



Quarter Moon



Gibbous Moon



Full Moon

6. Lay them on the ground in a circle.
7. One player will call out the names of the moon phases listed above. The other player will stand in the center of the circle and jump onto the picture of that moon phase.

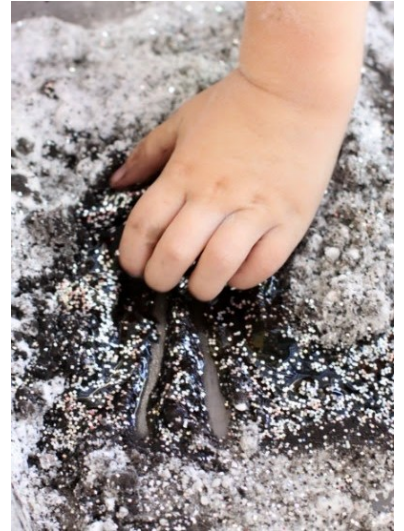
## Make moon dough!

### Materials:

- baking soda
- water
- black and silver glitter
- black liquid watercolor paint or food coloring

### Directions:

1. Add the baking soda and glitter to a large mixing bowl.
2. Slowly add water, pouring in just enough to make the baking soda stick together.
3. Add food coloring and mix with your hands until the dough is the color you want.
4. The moon dough is done when it is formable and holds shape.



Find this activity and more online at: [www.learnplayimagine.com/2014/06/moon-dough-recipe-for-play.html](http://www.learnplayimagine.com/2014/06/moon-dough-recipe-for-play.html).



Check out the Smithsonian Learning Lab for *Once Upon a Moon* here:

<https://learninglab.si.edu/q/ll-c/NGHiesz8iMJD0M6N>

Also, check out the Talk with me Toolkit! Designed for parents & children.

<https://learninglab.si.edu/q/ll-c/N4J9c86fN8Gv8bDt>

## Museum Connection: National Museum of Air and Space

Learn more about the National Air and Space Museum's companion facility—the **Udvar-Hazy Center** in Chantilly, VA. Opened in 2003, its two huge hangars — the Boeing Aviation Hangar and the James S. McDonnell Space Hangar — display thousands of aviation and space artifacts, including a **Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird**, a **Concorde**, and the **Space Shuttle *Discovery***. The Center also offers the **Airbus IMAX® Theater** and the **Donald D. Engen Observation Tower**, which gives you a 360-degree bird's-eye view of Washington Dulles International Airport and the surrounding area.



The Udvar-Hazy Center is open daily from 10am to 5:30pm. Admission is free. More information online at: [www.airandspace.si.edu/udvar-hazy-center](http://www.airandspace.si.edu/udvar-hazy-center)

## Related Resources and Links

[\*Luna and the Moon Rabbit\*](#) by Camille Whitcher, 2018. Recommended Pre-K to Kindergarten.

[\*The Little Spacecraft That Could\*](#) by Joyce Lapin, illustrated by Simona Ceccarelli, 2021. Recommended Grades 1 to 2.

[\*Look to the Stars\*](#) by Buzz Aldrin, illustrated by Wendell Minor, 2009. Recommended Grades 2 to 3.

[\*What's Faster Than a Speeding Cheetah\*](#) by Robert E. Wells, 1997. Recommended Grades 1 to 2.

[Space Place](#), from NASA. Explore the wonders of earth and space through this activity portal that includes activities and digital interactives.

[Moon in Motion](#), from NASA. Take a closer look at the different phases of the moon and print out your own moon observation journal to complete or look at other activities to learn about the Earth's Moon.

[Space Shuttle \*Discovery\*](#), from the National Museum of Air and Space's Udvar-Hazy Center. Here you can look at more information and detailed photographs of the Space Shuttle *Discovery*, on view at the museum.

[Hubble Space Telescope](#), from the National Museum of Air and Space. In this Deep Dive, you can learn about the history of the Hubble Space Telescope and why it's important to take good pictures of space.

[First Book](#), is a non-profit that runs a marketplace for free- and reduced-priced educational resources. Visit their website to see eligibility requirements and titles available.



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Smithsonian Associates advances the Institution's mission through life-enriching educational and cultural experiences inspired by the Smithsonian's research and collections for DC-region students, families, and adults, and for learning communities nationwide.

Discovery Theater has been presenting DC-area children with live educational performances for almost 40 years. With programs that enrich the Smithsonian experience for nearly 50,000 children annually, Discovery Theater is a gateway to the exhibits, collections, and themes contained in the museums and galleries on the National Mall and beyond. We explore American history and cultures, folk tales from around the world, and exciting, accessible science and math programs in the company of puppeteers, storytellers, dancers, actors, and musicians. Discovery Theater performances unite ideologies, enact themes that reflect the diversity of its audiences, open avenues of self-reflection, and offer an enjoyable means for parents and teachers to demonstrate life's lessons. There's so much to do and explore at the Smithsonian—and Discovery Theater is the ideal place to begin!



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